

Kyodan

Kyodan News Letter

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN JAPAN
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No. 27

September 20, 1968

A PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY THE ARMIES OF SOVIET RUSSIA AND THE FOUR OTHER NATIONS

The invasion of Czechoslovakia on August 20 and continued occupation by the Armies of Soviet Russia and the four other nations, we must conclude from the information we are able to get, is against the will of the people of Czechoslovakia. It is an act which violates the principles of international law as regards respect of national sovereignty and the non-intervention in the internal affairs of another nation. Furthermore it infringes upon a basic right of all people, the principle of self decision.

We have no choice but to strongly protest against this kind of unlawful activity that has been carried out against the Czechoslovakian people by the Soviet Union and allied countries.

It is said that the Czechoslovakian people aspire to a "humanistic socialism". If this is the case, it must be recognized as a natural human desire. We are involved for we feel that this act of oppression has lost sight of the true mission given to people by God. Therefore, we request the immediate total removal of the Armies of the involved nations, the cause of the present oppression imposed upon the people of Czechoslovakia.

At this time when world opinion is yearning for, and asking for peace the fact that the big powers, out of pride in their strength, have forgotten responsible action and trample underfoot the hopes for peace is inexcusable. We beseech the leaders of all nations, and especially those endowed with great power to seriously reflect on this point. Further we ask all people to act with courage and good conscience on behalf of peace. Moreover we pledge with the churches of the world that we shall endeavor to bring about peace through our unity in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The United Church of Christ in Japan

鈴木 正久

Masahisa Suzuki
Moderator

September 9, 1968

PREPARATION AND ANTICIPATION

The 15th General Assembly of The United Church of Christ in Japan will be held October 21-24 at the Fujimicho Church in Tokyo.

As in any Church Assembly many spiritual, moral, political and social issues will be discussed and it is anticipated that some definite steps in planning and action will come forth. A theme for the Church for the next two year period, 1968-1970 has already been proposed and approved. It is expected that the discussion of the Conference will be with this in mind. The theme selected is:

THE CHURCH MILITANT

ADVANCE THROUGH WITNESS IN LIFE

This banner is a natural finale to the Kyodan 10 year plan of evangelism encompassing the years 1962-1971; it is also a continuance of the past two years 1966-1968 theme "OUR CHURCH-TOMORROW", (Self-hood-Consolidation-Advance). In the past two years significant gains in self-hood have been made and definite steps taken toward maturity in areas of financial independence; in the area of consolidation, a two year study of the church structure has been completed and this will be submitted to the General Assembly for reaction and approval. This new structure is aimed at creating a structure that enables the church to be more effective without being hampered by unnecessary trappings.

The Church Militant is a must if the church is going to advance. However, the advance will come as outlined in the sub-theme "advance through witness in life". This advance must come from a daily confession and witness of the people who are the church.

The church is faced with "here" and "now". In order to adequately face and responsibly answer the problems and issues confronted in the "here" and "now" our people can do no less than be a confessing witnessing people and our church can be no other than "The Church Militant".

The Kyodan General Assembly consists of 440 delegates elected by the 15 Districts and includes ministers, lay men, and lay women. Other important items on the agenda are:

- the election of the Moderator and other officers
- a budget and program that will transfer more planning and work to the Districts from the Central offices
- the union with the United Church of Christ of Okinawa this making the Districts come to a total of 16.

BOOKLET

The Kyodan has recently published a booklet "Policy Statements and Statistics of the United Church of Christ in Japan". As it infers it is a compilation of present Kyodan policies as regards the National Constitution, Policy on Mission, Policy for Social Action, Policies on Ecumenical Cooperation plus the Kyodan Confession of Faith and Guide Lines for Christian Living. This booklet can be ordered from the Kyodan. Within Japan 100 yen plus postage; outside Japan 35 cents plus 15 cents postage. Recommended for Seminaries, Church-related Colleges, and reading for Church Officers.

TO BECOME PARTNERS

The United Church of Christ in Okinawa, formed in 1956 (formerly known as the Okinawa Christian Association) and the United Church of Christ in Japan, founded in 1941 will join hands at the General Assembly of the Kyodan this coming October and Okinawa will become a District of the Kyodan. To consummate this union the church in Okinawa will hold a special session of its Assembly at the same time as the Japan Kyodan and contact will be made by phone at the time of the voting.

This union has some special attractions in that the Okinawan people and the Japanese are of different ethnic lines; the Okinawans have an Okinawan culture dating back 2000 years. The Japanese controlled Okinawa before World War II, thus the official language is Japanese but there is in existence and use a very different Okinawan language. For the past few years the Okinawan Church has been using Japan Kyodan materials and sending ministers to Japan for training. It is significant that even though controlled by Japan for many years, the Okinawan Church still desires to become partners with the Japan Kyodan.

The Church in Okinawa is relatively small, they will bring 48 churches, 1700 members, 24 ministers, and 1 church related school. Let us pray that both churches shall benefit by this union and remain open in spirit to absorb the leadership both can contribute.

WITNESS IN LIFE

As we read Bible stories, lepers are in abundance and the reader has great sympathy for these people. However, in our day, leprosy is just another disease. We do not often hear of it, let alone see and have contact with it.

Years ago in Japan the case was quite different. One young lady decided to make this a life venture. Born in 1891, Miss Chio Mikami, at the age of 16, began the task of Christian Witness to the lepers. She founded "Suzuran Town" (Lily of the Valley Town) which was an immediate success.

Supported by Christian friends, recognized by the Government, Miss Mikami has been an inspiration to all Christians, as well as to the people with leprosy. She has been the kind of witness that we all think about when we imagine ourselves as a completely dedicated person.

Her efforts have twice been honored by the Princess Teimei, mother of the present Emperor, in the form of commemorative gifts. The Japanese Government has bestowed the following honors:

Health and Cultural Award	1953
Nightingale Award	1957
Yellow Ribbon Metal	1957
4th Order of the Sacred Treasurer	1965

Now retired, Miss Mikami has but one aim, the continuation of the work to which God has called her. We can all rejoice that there are Christians like this, who witness in life.

